



Membership Information, Guidelines,
and Application Procedures

2019 – 2020

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MISSION

The mission of URTA is to ensure the continued renewal of the American theatre by supporting excellence in the training of new theatre artists.

HISTORY

Born at Wingspread in July 1969, URTA was founded by Keith Engar of the University of Utah and Robert Schnitzer of the University of Michigan, with the purpose of exploring how university theatres could work together for the benefit of each other, and the general improvement of university and professional theatre.

From the very start, the signature program of URTA has been combined auditions. Today, 1,200 MFA candidates annually attend the URTA Auditions & Interviews to present their work to nearly 300 recruiters from URTA member and non-member programs. Over the years, tens of thousands of young artists, representing several generations, have taken part in this rite of passage in the pursuit of a professional theatre career. In 2015, URTA launched the Satellite Auditions, where non-member programs can be involved in the recruiting process.

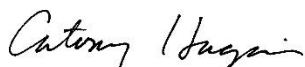
In 1976, URTA and the Actors' Equity Association finalized the AEA-URTA Agreement; a pioneering contract that promotes professional experience for students, and accommodates the actor-teacher model for developing new theatre artists. Today, hundreds of young actors earn points toward Equity status in productions which represent nearly 2,000 workweeks for professional actors and stage managers, and more than \$2M in earnings.

The largest URTA program, the Artist Engagement Service, was created in 1979 to help universities employ professional artists. This nonprofit paymaster service now counts resident theatres, municipalities, cultural institutions, independent producers and individual artists among its clients. More than 700 artists pass through our payroll system each year, accounting for more than \$3M in activity.

URTA continues to develop programs and services that answer the needs of university theaters, training programs, and individual artists. We offer an array of continuing education programming throughout the year at various conferences and festivals, cooperative advertising in leading theatre publications, the URTA Umbrella retirement service platform, and a burgeoning career outreach endeavor that seeks to educate college and early career theatre artists about professional training and navigating a path to a professional career.

At our 50th anniversary gala, URTA announced the Scott L. Steele Legacy Fund which will support theatre artists in making the leap from training to the profession.

URTA members are the backbone that allow us to pursue our mission in an impactful way, and elevate the professional field. We look forward to having you join us in this work.



Tony Hagopian, Executive Director

URTA GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Integrate professional theatre and theatre training programs.
- Support professional theatre training of the highest level, where advanced students and professional artists work together in production and performance.
- Encourage professional practices in the training of theatre artists—the term “Theatre”, used to encompass a wide range of performance media including film, television and other interactive arts.
- Insure the highest possible standards and integrity in recruiting and selecting students for professional theatre training programs.
- Promote the growth of professional theatre, and of audiences attending and supporting theatre in America.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

UNION AGREEMENTS

URTA maintains the collectively bargained AEA-URTA Agreement with the Actors' Equity Association (AEA), which serves the needs of resident theatres associated with colleges and universities.

Additionally, URTA consults with the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC) on its Academic Contract, and with United Scenic Artists (USA) on the USA-URTA Agreement. These contracts make it possible for colleges, universities and associated theatres to integrate professional actors, stage managers, directors, choreographers and designers with theatre students both on stage and in the classroom. They also provide additional job opportunities to professional artists across the spectrum.

ARTIST ENGAGEMENT SERVICE

URTA offers the only nonprofit paymaster service of its kind, setting the stage for hiring professional guest artists in theatres of all sizes, universities, development labs, cultural institutions, and even supports individual artists producing their own work. URTA takes on full Employer of Record duties including tax reporting, pension/health contributions, workers compensation, and more.

Standing relationships with theatrical unions allow URTA to operate as “Producer of Record” for union contracts, bringing professionals to colleges and training programs that might otherwise be restricted in engaging union artists.

The program annually services more than 700 artists and staff in more than 250 productions, enabling artist earnings of more than \$1.5M.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

URTA AUDITIONS AND INTERVIEWS (The URTAs)

“The URTAs” have been our flagship program for more than 50 years. Every year 1,200 MFA candidates from all theatre disciplines—acting, design and technology, directing, stage management, and arts leadership—take part in this recruiting event where they have the opportunity to meet faculty recruiters from many of the top theatre programs in the country, all in one place. Training programs find the URTAs to be an unparalleled resource for recruiting the most promising graduate students to their

schools. It can also be a wonderful way for candidates to discover programs they may not have otherwise been familiar with. Recruiters appreciate having their callback interviews scheduled and organized by the experienced URТА staff.

Full recruiting privileges are only available to URТА members, however accompanying programs enable non-members to take part in a more limited way.

GUEST AUDITIONS

The Guest Auditions (formerly the “Satellite Auditions”) are open to select non-member training programs and are offered only to acting candidates taking part in the URТА Auditions. They represent an expanded opportunity for the candidates to be seen by an even larger pool of recruiters. Candidates taking advantage of the Guest Auditions must do so on a separate day from their URТА Audition. URТА does not schedule or coordinate callback interviews for programs recruiting at the Guest Auditions.

While URТА members are exclusively MFA programs, institutions recruiting through the Guest Auditions represent additional models of training, including conservatories, MA programs, and many international schools.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

URТА conducts a variety of practical workshops, seminars, and panel discussions that promote the continuing education of theatre artists and faculty practitioners alike. Continuing education sessions take place at university campuses, theatres, as well at the annual URТАs, and other conferences and events throughout the year.



CAREER OUTREACH

Educating young artists about pathways to the professional theatre is an important goal of URТА. To this end, URТА staff and member faculty regularly travel to colleges, theatres, and other institutions across the nation to speak with students about professional training, graduate school, and the tools necessary to develop a career in theatre.

URТА informs students about the many employment opportunities in the theatre and entertainment industries, about how to research training programs and prepare for graduate auditions and interviews, and demystifies the process of embarking on a theatre career.

UNDERGRAD PREVIEW

URTA provides undergraduate theatre students the opportunity to sit in on the URTAs, offering an up close look at the audition and interview process for graduate school. Students then have the chance to speak with URTA faculty recruiters about their programs, what they look for in candidates, and how to approach the process. Typically, students return to their home institution for an even deeper discussion with their instructors about their experience attending the URTAs.

COOPERATIVE ADVERTISING

Offering considerable savings on advertising with many of the country's leading theatre journals, the URTA Cooperative Advertising Program has proven an invaluable, inexpensive and unique marketing tool for theatre programs to raise their national profile before a diverse readership of students, professors, and professionals working in all areas of theatre, film and television. Publications have included *American Theatre*, *Backstage*, *Stage Directions*, *Theatre Design & Technology*, among others.

THE URTA UMBRELLA

The URTA Umbrella is an investment platform offered through URTA, which makes retirement savings available to employees of small arts organizations. Designed to educate and empower arts professionals to attain financial security, the Umbrella brings together expert advisors, investment managers, and administrators to create a comprehensive retirement plan.

SPOTLIGHT NEWSLETTER

URTA's bi-annual newsletter, *Spotlight*, collects news and announcements about URTA and its events and programs. Each issue contains interviews with notable faculty and alumni, articles about member programs and productions, and other items of interest.

Spotlight also offers a platform for faculty from member universities and partner theatres to publish articles on theatre and professional practice that will be read by a national audience of peers and colleagues.

URTA AWARDS

SCOTT L. STEELE LEGACY AWARD

Open to graduate students from URTA member institutions, each year a select number of recipients receive a substantial monetary award towards making the leap from training to the profession. Awards are granted based on an application process adjudicated by the Legacy Fund Committee.

AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE TRAINING

URTA recognizes two universities every year for excellence in undergraduate training, based on their students' presentations at the URTA Auditions and Interviews. The Award includes a Candidate Award which the university may assign to a graduating senior from their school in the following year. URTA also recognizes eight individual educators for achievement in preparing their students for advanced study.

CANDIDATE AWARDS

URTA Candidate Awards provide free registration for the URTA Auditions and Interviews, including free admission to continuing education sessions and other programming. The Candidate Award is currently offered in several ways.

SOUND DESIGN

Recognizing the important growth in the field of sound design and the goal of introducing graduate study to students with backgrounds outside traditional theater, URTA offers a Candidate Award to all candidates in sound design.

ARTS LEADERSHIP

URTA is committed to increasing diversity among leadership in the American theater. To support those seeking training in areas including arts administration, theatre management, producing and arts entrepreneurship, URTA offers a Candidate Award to all candidates in Arts Leadership.

KENNEDY CENTER – AMERICAN COLLEGE THEATER FESTIVAL

For 50 years, the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival has served as a catalyst in improving the quality of college theater in the United States. KC-ACTF is a natural partner with URTA and to underscore our overlapping missions, URTA provides Candidate Awards to the following qualified KC-ACTF participants:

- National Finalists for the Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship
- SDC Directing Initiative fellows
- Finalists for the National Award for Design Excellence (Scenic, Costume, Lighting, Sound)
- KCACTF National Stage Management Fellows

PAY-IT-FORWARD CANDIDATE AWARDS

Each year, candidates for the URTA Auditions and Interviews may opt to donate as little as \$1 to the Pay-it-Forward fund, which supports future awards to candidates on a needs-based system. Currently, donations are matched (up to \$1000 per year) by URTA sponsor Vertigo.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Networking opportunities for diverse faculties to meet with one another for the exchange of ideas and practices.
- Full access to the URTA Auditions & Interviews in all cities and discipline areas.
- Professional consultation regarding theatrical unions, contracts, accounting procedures, and the selection and recruitment of qualified students and artist/teachers.
- Faculty from member institutions are eligible to lead URTA continuing education sessions, take part in the career outreach program, and publish material in the URTA Spotlight. All of which can prove a productive part of tenure dossiers and other professional advancement.
- Graduates of member universities are eligible for the Scott L. Steele Legacy Award.
- Expanded offerings and discounted pricing in the Cooperative Advertising service.
- Annual fee waived for use of the URTA Umbrella.
- Professional guidance in planning and development for theatre programs seeking to integrate professional and educational functions within the context of producing organizations.
- Assistance in establishing contacts for institutions seeking to employ professionals as artists-in-residence and artist/teachers.

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

All URTA members have professional goals and offer a comprehensive approach to professional theatre training. Our members achieve this by selecting talented and committed theatre artists and providing a rigorous training program that includes ongoing and consistent contact with professional artists.

URTA member programs are characterized by:

- One or more Master of Fine Arts degree offerings.
- A commitment to the highest professional practices in all areas of theatrical production and performance training, demonstrated by the quality, size, and scope of the educational, artistic, managerial, and promotional components of the organization.
- A fair and equitable recruiting process for locating and developing potential talent.
- A graduate student body of significant size and scope to provide students sufficient opportunity for artistic collaboration and intellectual stimulation.
- A systematic and ongoing approach to career entry for graduates of MFA programs.
- The use of faculty with professional credentials and a commitment to encouraging and maintaining their professional creative work/research, as well as the use of professional guest artists and practitioners.
- Programs and procedures for developing a knowledgeable and committed audience for professional theatre.
- Compliance with the URTA Code of Ethics (see below).

Typically, an institution meeting the above criteria is organized around one of the following models:

- A professional training program within a university theatre or drama department that offers significant and regular contact with the profession and professional artists and artisans.

- A professional training program within a university theatre or drama department that is significantly associated with a professional producing theatre.
- A conservatory program within a university theatre or drama department that offers distinct professional training and contact with the profession, and with professional artists and artisans.
- A conservatory program within a professional theatre that offers systematic professional training and contact with professional artists and artisans.

URTA CODE OF ETHICS

- Each URTA institution is expected to impress upon its faculty, staff and students the importance of personal and professional integrity.
- URTA members shall recognize their responsibility to respect the legal rights and human dignity of all individuals.
- Policies concerning recruiting, admission, financial aid, schedule, evaluation of student progress and operational procedures, shall be honestly and clearly stated in all published literature.
- Each member institution is expected to truthfully advertise and promote its productions and programs.
- No offers (stated or implied) of financial assistance or program acceptance shall be made to persons who take part in the URTA Auditions and Interviews until the conclusion of the audition process, and pursuant to URTA policy on offers and responses.
- No URTA member may actively recruit a student presently enrolled in another program, unless the student initiates a transfer of his or her own volition.
- No promise, written or verbal, of the availability of financial assistance for potential students shall be made unless the member institution has good reason to believe it can deliver on the promise.
- An URTA member program shall accept no student unless, in the honest opinion of the selectors, the student has a reasonable chance to successfully complete the program.
- If it is determined that a student will not successfully complete the program after being admitted, that student shall be so informed. If at all possible, this will be done in time for the student to apply to other programs for the following seasons.
- URTA member institutions are responsible for attempting to safeguard the health and safety of students, staff, and audience.

RECRUITING POLICIES FOR THE URTA AUDITIONS & INTERVIEWS

ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR MAKING OFFERS

URTA members may not make formal offers of financial assistance until the first Monday, one week after the URTA Auditions & Interviews have concluded. Candidates are under no obligation to respond to offers of financial support before the conclusion of a three-week period beginning on the first day which URTA members are allowed to make offers. Earlier deadlines for acceptance of such offers violate this policy.

In those instances where a candidate accepts an offer before the end of the three-week period, and subsequently desires to withdraw that acceptance, the candidate may submit in writing a resignation of the appointment at any time through the end of the three-week period. However, an acceptance given or left in force after the three week period, commits the candidate not to accept another offer without first obtaining a written release from the institution to which a commitment has been made.

Similarly, an offer by an institution after the three-week period is conditional on presentation by the candidate of the written release from any previously accepted offer. A copy of this policy should accompany every scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, and assistantship offer.

RECRUITING FOR SUBSEQUENT YEARS

A school recruiting at the URTAs for the academic year beginning in the fall, but who formally offers a candidate a place in the following, or subsequent year's class, must guarantee that offer until the date in the next year (designated by URTA) when candidates may be asked to respond to offers made in that year's cycle of recruiting.

A candidate is free not to respond to such an offer until the referenced date. A candidate is free to accept the offer, but may change their mind over the course of the intervening year. The candidate must advise the school of any change in their plans. A school making such an offer must inform a candidate of their rights regarding the offer and provide them a copy of the related URTA memo on the policy. To avoid confusion, the offer should be memorialized in writing.

APPLICATION AND/OR PROCESSING FEES

A primary intention of the URTA Auditions and Interviews is to provide candidates with a financially fair and equitable means of pursuing graduate training. However, some school administrations require a potential candidate to submit an application and pay a related application fee prior to allowing a department to consider the candidate for a position. URTA strongly urges member programs operating under such strictures to act responsibly and ethically in identifying candidates of serious interest to them before encouraging candidates to submit applications and pay application or processing fees in advance of program reviews and/or formal offers.

URTA ANNUAL INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

URTA asks that each member respond to the following requests for written information made each year:

DIRECTORY UPDATE

A member must update their entry in the URTA Membership Directory each year. The member's profile page contains fundamental information about their graduate programs. The directory is distributed to candidates attending the URTA Auditions & Interviews, continuing education and career outreach events, at various conferences, and is available for download on the URTA website.

PROGRAM CHANGES

Members should provide brief notes on any substantial changes to their graduate programs over the previous year. Such changes include starting a new program, or suspending a current one; changes in recruiting cycle; shifts between 3-year and 2-year matriculation; etc. These notes provide URTA with an effective means of updating its website and various databases maintained for purposes of advocacy, marketing, candidate services and more.

OFFER/ACCEPTANCE SURVEY

Each spring, members are solicited for information on the results of their recruiting activity through URTA. They are asked to provide the names of all URTA candidates to whom an offer was made, and the candidate's eventual response to the offer. URTA candidates include all candidates who attended the URTA Auditions & Interviews, even if they also applied directly to a member school or arranged independent an audition or interview. A school's particular information is treated with strict confidentiality, though general, overall statistics related to recruiting and acceptance rates may be made available through URTA.

MEMBERSHIP ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Members should display the current URTA logo on their Department website and all advertising materials, print and digital. Members are asked to display the logo in printed performance programs with the text "Member, University Resident Theatre Association."

URTA FEES AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

URTA membership dues are \$3,250 per year. Programs which do not recruit through the URTA Auditions & Interviews in any area, for two consecutive years or longer, may receive a forty (40%) percent discount during off years.

URTA membership dues must be paid in full by the end of each calendar year. In any case, a member university's dues must be paid in full in order to participate in the URTA Auditions & Interviews.

Any URTA member in arrears with regards to payment of membership dues shall be provided with formal notice that payment is due immediately; failure to respond with payment in a timely fashion shall lead to suspension of their membership in URTA.

Should payment not be forthcoming in response to the above-referenced formal notice within 30 days, a member in arrears shall be subject to immediate suspension. A member shall be notified of any such suspension of their membership. This suspension may be negated by prompt payment of dues in arrears.

Should a suspended member fail to pay dues in arrears by the end of URTA's fiscal year (June 30th), their continued membership in URTA will be subject to review by the Board of Directors. A member facing such a review may make an appeal to the board, explaining any special and relevant circumstances that have prevented payment of dues. This appeal must be made in writing and addressed to the board, care of the URTA offices, no later than July 1st.

The Board may respond as follows:

- The board may act to formally end a member's relationship with URTA based on dues in arrears and the previous suspension of membership.
- The board may direct the executive director to arrange with the suspended member a schedule of payment(s) of said dues. The institution's membership in URTA shall continue to be held in suspension until payment(s) have been made as per the agreed upon schedule of payments.

Should a member fail to meet the scheduled payment(s) of dues in arrears, the executive director is authorized to automatically end the relationship between the member and URTA until further notice; to inform the former member of this action; and to inform the board of this action.

URTA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

URTA is a group of like-minded training programs and theatres that have formed an association in order to promote and support professional practice in theatre training and assist in fostering the growth of professional theatre in America. It is expected that each member will reflect this core mission in its own unique way. The URTA membership application and review process is based on the conviction that the URTA membership is primarily guided by principles rather than specifics.

URTA looks for a clear and progressive path in curriculum, professional training and postgraduate transitioning. It is possible to achieve these ends effectively in many different ways. The application and review process provides opportunity for self-reflection by the applicant institution and allows the URTA board of directors to determine membership based on an informed judgment of the overall nature and quality of the program.

High quality theatre training programs consistently display certain key characteristics that produce well-trained and well-connected graduates. Membership in URTA is therefore an assurance to potential students that they are considering a training program, which, by strength of its faculty, integrity of its training, connection to the profession, and record of successful graduates, can offer a reasonable hope of preparing them for a career in the theatre. This is the standard by which membership in URTA is determined.

URTA has established procedures to ensure that its members meet the membership criteria of the Association. Once membership is attained, URTA continues to review each program on a regular basis.

Institutions seeking URTA membership should become familiar with all relevant sections of this document. The procedures outlined herein provide the best base for an assessment of an institution's characteristics as related to membership in URTA.

If there are any concerns about an institution's readiness to meet membership criteria, URTA can arrange for the assistance of an independent consultant to help in making a determination. The work of such a consultant does not reflect the opinions of any URTA representative (reviewers, membership committee members, board members), who may be involved in the formal review process. The results of a consultancy are the sole property of the institution.

I. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

An institution applying for membership, or for continued membership, in URTA normally completes the application and review process over the course of two consecutive semesters. During the first semester, the institution:

- Issues a letter of intent to apply.
- Completes and submits the Membership Application Form.
- Begins work on the Applicant Report required by URTA.
- Schedules the URTA (or joint NAST-URTA) campus visit.

Over the second semester of the process, the institution:

- Completes and submits the Applicant Report, no later than one month prior to the campus visit.
- Undergoes the URTA campus visit.
- Is provided a copy of the URTA Reviewers' Report generated by the visit.
- Provides a written response to the Reviewers' Report (optional).

II. THE FORMAL APPLICATION

Institutions seeking URTA membership must file the following material with URTA:

1. A letter stating the institution's intent to apply for URTA membership. The letter of intent must:
 - List the programs relevant to URTA review. This includes any MFA theatre programs in acting, directing, design and technology, stage management, and arts leadership.
 - Indicate which of the above programs are seeking URTA membership. (Note: Though not all programs may be seeking membership in URTA, all will be included in the campus review.)
 - Propose specific dates for the campus review.
 - Indicate whether the institution plans to pursue a joint review with NAST (see section VII below). If a joint review is being requested, a copy of the letter of intent should also be sent to the NAST offices.
2. The URTA Membership Application (Exhibit #1), including an application fee of \$150.

The following materials are due during the first year of the application process, and no later than four weeks before the URTA campus visit:

3. The URTA Applicant Report and all supporting materials (Exhibit #2).
4. A copy of the Department/School Graduate Catalogue in either print or digital format.

III. APPLICATION AND PROCESS EXPENSES

- A non-refundable application fee of \$150 is required to be sent in with the Membership Application (see above).
- Institutions will be charged a campus visit and process administration fee of \$500. The institution will be invoiced for this fee upon confirmation of the URTA campus visit. (This fee is waived in the case of concurrent NAST-URTA reviews)
- For a concurrent NAST-URTA review, NAST determines the administration fee and schedules the campus visit.
- Applicant institutions are responsible for all review expenses related to transportation, housing and applicable out-of-pocket costs to the reviewers. Such expenses are invoiced by URTA (or NAST) after the visit and based upon reviewers' receipts.

IV. SELECTION OF URTA CAMPUS REVIEWERS

Upon receipt of the letter of intent to apply for URTA membership, URTA's executive director will recommend a team of two individuals to serve as campus reviewers, and forward the proposal in writing to the applicant institution.

The executive director will consider institutional interests of a general nature such as areas of specialization and geographic location, but will not consider requests for specific individuals to serve as URTA reviewers. URTA reviewers are selected from current URTA member institutions. No more than one member of the campus review team shall be a member of the URTA board of directors.

The institution may offer objection to specific reviewers. The institution should explain why they object to a particular reviewer. The executive director may alter the review team at their discretion.

After reviewers have been chosen that are acceptable to the institution, URTA will send written invitations to the reviewers.

For institutions seeking a joint on-site review by URTA and NAST, NAST procedures will be used for selecting members of the review team.

V. CAMPUS REVIEW DATES

The campus visit must be scheduled at a time when the institution is producing a major production that presents the work of its graduate student body. Typically, campus visits are conducted between September 1 and November 30, or March 1 and mid-April. Visits will be two or three days in length.

When institutions seek a concurrent review by URTA and NAST, NAST procedures will be used for selecting the review dates.

VI. THE CAMPUS REVIEW

During the campus visit, the URTA review team will:

- Observe operations of the production organization including at least one major production that prominently features the work of graduate students. Review and evaluate the work of MFA students from graduate programs not represented in such a production.
- Interview personnel, including shop staff, concerned with the production organization.
- Review the production organization's relationship to professional training, career entry and professional employment.
- Assess classroom study through attending classes and meeting with faculty, staff and students.
- Consider the budgets applicable to professional training and the production operations.
- Inspect the physical plant, including teaching studios, performance spaces and production shops, and the equipment devoted to the production program.
- Evaluate programs and procedures for developing a knowledgeable and committed audience for professional theatre.
- Evaluate the current operation of the production organization with respect to professional standards, and consider the extent to which such standards can be maintained and/or improved upon in the future.
- Hold a concluding conference with the appropriate theatre executive(s) to share ideas and concerns.
- Engage in other activities as applicable in order to evaluate the applicant's adherence to URTA's membership criteria. Once the on-site review has been scheduled, either URTA reviewer may contact the applicant regarding additional special activities to be made part of the evaluation.

A sample itinerary will be provided to applicant institutions.

VII. CONCURRENT REVIEW OPTION

The National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) is a national accrediting organization for educational programs in theatre. NAST accreditation is not required for URTA membership. However, a program that is accredited by NAST and is a member of URTA may seek renewal of accreditation and membership at the same time. The campus visits required by both NAST and URTA may be conducted jointly.

Similarly, an institution undergoing initial NAST accreditation and URTA membership for the first time, may do so concurrently.

The URТА application and its attendant materials are very distinct from the NAST application documents and Self-Study. However, certain information compiled by an institution will prove of use in responding to the separate narratives and exhibit documentation requested by the two organizations.

Both URТА and NAST should be advised as soon as possible, should it be decided to seek a concurrent review. Please note that successful accreditation by NAST does not guarantee membership in URТА.

When institutions seek a concurrent review by NAST and URТА, the activities and responsibilities outlined in sections one through six above are accomplished in conjunction with, or in addition to, those required by NAST.

VIII. GUEST PARTICIPATION - URТА AUDITIONS AND INTERVIEWS

An Institution applying for membership in URТА may attend the URТА Auditions and Interviews as a Guest Participant (see Exhibit #4).

Attendance is based on the institution either having already undergone an URТА campus visit the previous fall, or having an URТА campus visit scheduled for the following spring. The intent is that an institution shall only participate as a Guest once. However, in cases where a program's review process is extended for various reasons, Guest status may be granted again, to be decided on a case by case basis.

IX. PROCEDURES PRIOR TO URТА BOARD ACTION

No later than six (6) weeks after completion of the campus review, the URТА reviewers will complete their report and submit it to URТА.

The report will address how completely the institution applying for membership complies with URТА membership criteria. No conclusion or specific recommendation regarding membership will be made by the campus reviewers, nor included in the Reviewers' Report. URТА will forward a copy of the report to the URТА Membership Committee and to the director/chair/head of the institution applying for membership.

The institution will have the opportunity to respond to URТА as to the accuracy and detail of the report. A response, if any, is due within one month of receiving the Reviewers' Report. Copies of a response will be forwarded to the Membership Committee.

The Membership Committee of URТА will review each application, all supporting material, the Reviewers' Report and the institution's optional response, along with any other pertinent material, prior to the next scheduled committee meeting following the receipt of such material. The Membership Committee will then make a recommendation to the full URТА board.

X. REVIEW OF THE APPLICATION BY THE URТА BOARD

The board of directors may consider membership applications at any of the regularly scheduled meetings of the board. All materials will be reviewed.

Regarding applications for new membership, the URТА board of directors may take one of the following actions:

- Approve the application and grant membership.
- Reject the application, citing reasons, and provide notice of URТА appeals procedures.
- Defer further action pending receipt of additional information from the applicant. A new campus visit may be requested at the discretion of the board. Use of the URТАs as a Guest Participant by

the applicant institution may be made available upon board authorization.

For applications of continued membership, review by the board may result in one of the following actions, or another variation thereof, determined by the board:

- The institution is continued as a member in good standing.
- Action on continued membership is deferred, to permit the correction of specific problems in meeting membership criteria. While in deferment, an institution is retained as a full member and afforded all rights and privileges as such.
- The member institution is placed on probation for a maximum of three (3) years, during which it can address stated problems in meeting membership criteria. While on probation, an institution is retained as a full member and afforded all rights and privileges, unless restrictions are applied by authorization of the board.
- Membership in URTA is suspended for specific deficiencies in meeting membership criteria, which the institution has failed to address during the preceding periods of deferred action and probation. An institution whose membership has been suspended will be prohibited from using URTA programs and services.
- Membership in URTA is not renewed due to deficiencies in meeting membership criteria, and/or for other specific reasons determined by the board.

The Executive Director is asked to inform the member institution of the decision of the URTA Board within sixty (60) days of Board action.

XI. APPEALS

An institution that is denied membership by action of the URTA Board may seek reversal of this decision by repeating the URTA application and review process no sooner than five years after the action of the Board on its previous application.

XII. EXPIRATION OF APPLICATION

An institution that allows its application to expire may not resubmit an application for membership until five years have elapsed since expiration of the previous application. An application is deemed to have expired if the related procedures have not been completed within two consecutive, academic years.

SUMMARY

It is understood that the URTA board normally grants a period of deferral before placing a member institution on probation. A maximum of five (5) years, from initial deferral through probation and suspension of membership, is considered by the board a reasonable and adequate period for an institution to address problems in meeting membership criteria, and to provide URTA with information that such problems have been successfully corrected. A member institution may provide information confirming that it has successfully addressed deficiencies in meeting criteria before the applicable deadlines provided in deferral of action and probation.

The Membership Committee and URTA board may request additional information from a member institution. The board may request a special campus review to ascertain that previously identified deficiencies in meeting criteria have been corrected by an institution. The cost of a special campus review shall be the responsibility of the member institution.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The processes for applying for URTA new or continued membership produces material and information generated by the institution, URTA, and URTA representatives. This material is considered the property of the institution and shall be treated with confidentiality by URTA, its agents and representatives. With the exception of general information previously provided the public, use of this material outside the processes of application for membership shall be with permission of the institution, or by the institution itself.

EXHIBIT #1
URTA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please thoroughly review the URTA Membership Guidelines before completing an application

Institution Name _____

Chair/Producing Director _____

Complete Mailing Address _____

Office Telephone _____ E-mail Address _____

Other faculty/staff to whom correspondence should be sent _____

School/Department Website _____

Institution's MFA programs for which URTA maintains a recruiting category

- Acting
- Arts Leadership
- Design & Technology
- Directing
- Stage Management

List which of the above programs you would like to be considered for URTA membership

Suggested dates for on-campus review _____

Indicate whether on-campus review will be in tandem with review for NAST accreditation

- URTA-only campus review
- Concurrent URTA/NAST review

Members agree to note their affiliation with URTA in all advertising specific to theatre training programs.

Non-refundable Application Fee \$ 150.00 (please enclose)
URTA Membership Dues \$ 3,250.00, billed annually

As Chairperson or Executive Director of the above institution, I apply for membership to the University Resident Theatre Association. On behalf of the applying institution, I agree to work towards the goals and ideals of the organization, and understand that my program must be reviewed prior to acceptance of this membership.

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name and Title

EXHIBIT #2

URTA APPLICANT REPORT

INTRODUCTION

As a foundation for meeting specific URTA membership criteria, it is expected that the applicant's MFA programs (or equivalent) will already meet basic requirements for this degree established by the historic practices of the field (for example, in National Association of Schools of Theatre accreditation standards). These basics include practice-oriented content and competency development at the Master of Fine Arts level, program length and intensity, required evaluations, and resources consistent with program purposes. URTA membership is awarded only when MFA-level programs of professional training meet additional criteria as outlined in the URTA Membership Guidelines. The questions and requests below solicit information about the basics, but focus primarily on URTA membership criteria.

For purposes of the Applicant Report, the institution should include information for all its MFA programs for which URTA maintains a recruiting category, whether or not each of those programs is applying for membership in URTA at this time. URTA recruiting categories include: Acting, Design and Technology, Directing, Stage Management, and Arts Leadership (which may include Theatre Management, Arts Administration, Producing, etc.).

All of the above MFA programs will be included in the URTA review process, however URTA will only consider for membership the programs indicated by the institution for consideration.

The responses provided in this report will enable URTA to determine if a professional training program or institution meets the criteria required of all URTA members.

Information from the department's website may serve as responses to some of the information requested in the URTA Applicant Report. Applicable website information may be used (copied and pasted) or referred to in the report as it exists on the web. As part of any response in the Applicant Report, please provide a specific link to the page(s) needed in the report.

Examples of website information that may serve Applicant Report requirements are: residency requirements, season brochures, policies governing admission, evaluation and progress toward student retention, tuition/fees and other charges, graduate catalog, alumni news.

Not all website entries meet Applicant Report requirements. For instance, abbreviated faculty/staff biographies are not sufficient substitutes for vitae and resumes. Please consider referring to website information carefully.

Utilize narrative essays, statements, lists, etc., to respond to the points and questions below, and to demonstrate how membership criteria are met. Responses should be detailed, but as concise as possible. Length of the Applicant Report (not including supporting material, lists, vitae, etc.) will vary depending on the number of specializations addressed in Parts Two and Three.

The Applicant Report and Membership Application (Exhibit #1) may be submitted digitally, as PDF files. All materials should be submitted to URTA no later than four weeks prior to the campus review.

If submission is being made by a cloud-based platform (such as Dropbox), Please be sure URTA and the reviewers are aware of the shared contents and how to access them.

I. PART ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE DEPARTMENT OR SCHOOL

1. OVERALL MISSION STATEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL CRITERIA

It is expected that members in URTA demonstrate a commitment to the highest professional standards. Please provide responses to the following:

- A. What is the Mission Statement of the Department/School (i.e. the overall mission of those areas of specialization being submitted in this application)? Describe any additional goals and objectives.
- B. Describe how the Department/School's artistic program provides professional training in theatrical practices that are consistent with professional standards, including production preparation, rehearsal and performance.
- C. Provide a list of public productions (utilizing graduate students enrolled in the specializations addressed in this application) for the past three years. Indicate length of the runs, the director of each, use of guest artists, if any, or other unique or particularly interesting features.

2. FACULTY AND TEACHING PROFESSIONALS

URTA member schools are expected to maintain a resident faculty who are qualified by substantial professional experience and/or credentials for their specific teaching assignments. These faculty members must be listed in published literature of the Department/School, including the school's website.

In addition, students in the specific programs are expected to have regular exposure to professionals in their discipline, either as guest artists or artists-in-residence.

Please provide:

- A. A list of full and part-time faculty and professional staff with biographies indicating educational and professional experience. Attach copies of vitae or resumes. For faculty teaching in each specialization, vitae must include professional credits and teaching credentials. Indicate which courses each faculty member teaches.
- B. A discussion on how the Department/School provides an appropriate number of qualified faculty members for the needs of the programs served.
- C. A listing of guest professionals employed in the past three years and a brief description of how they contributed to the overall mission.
- D. Indicate how students have regular exposure to professionals in the discipline by describing how each specialized program incorporates at least one of the following for each student:
 - 1) Some sustained system of exposing students to high quality professional actors, directors, designers, etc.
 - 2) A professional resident company under an Equity contract.
 - 3) A substantive, verifiable internship program at a professional theatre.
 - 4) An institutional commitment to create such a professional theatre or internship as part of the training program.

3. PRODUCTION ORGANIZATION

The production program must be of sufficient size, scope and quality to provide adequate performance and production opportunities for all the students in each specialized program. Please provide:

- A. A discussion on how the production practices conform to the standards and methods used in the professional theatre. These practices should include, but are not limited to, artistic

management, play selection process, rehearsal and performance methods, production preparation, design and technical production values, and promotional, marketing and audience development efforts.

- B. An overview of the financial and management functions of the Department/School and how it serves the needs of the specializations under review.
- C. Complete production budget information for the last fiscal year indicating earned and unearned income, and production expenses.
- D. An organizational chart for the producing unit and a list of positions in the production program (i.e. artistic director, managing director, dramaturge, stage manager, production manager, etc.) with a brief description of the responsibilities for each position.

4. PHYSICAL PLANT AND SUPPORT RESOURCES

The Department/School shall operate in a safe and well-maintained environment with adequate library resources appropriate to the needs of the various specializations. Please provide:

- A. A descriptive list of facilities used to support the needs of educational and production activity. This list should include a description of all production and rehearsal facilities, classrooms, studio spaces, storage and other spaces controlled by the Department/School.
- B. A descriptive list of equipment and software used to train students to current professional practice.
- C. A description and evaluation of the current status of the physical environment with regard to general maintenance, safety and security.
- D. An evaluation of the library resources with regard to the needs of each specialization. This should include books, digital videos, sound recordings and other media.
- E. Links to the Department/School's website for information as indicated above.

5. POST GRADUATE SUPPORT

URTA member schools make a significant commitment to support the transition of graduating students and alumni into the profession. Please provide an overview of how the Department/School supports this commitment. More information regarding how each specialization helps to transition their students into the profession will be requested below.

6. ACCREDITATION/AUTHORIZATION AND PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The Institution's Accreditation/Authorization must be clearly stated and defined in published materials.

- A. Please provide the name of the accrediting organization and when the Department/School, or parent institution, was last reviewed.
- B. Please provide a brief description of the formal relationship(s), if any, existing between the Department/School and an associated or professional theatre company or other professional organization.
- C. Please provide samples of recent graduate students' course schedules over their entire enrollment, and from all disciplines. Include those who have graduated during the past three years. These records must demonstrate consistency between published requirements and the academic records of students.

II. **PART TWO: GENERAL AND COMMON PROGRAM INFORMATION**

1. INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

Each specialized program is expected to be constructed as an appropriately sophisticated sequence of courses and experiences that offers a high standard of professional training within that discipline. Program information, degree requirements, and application process must be published, readily available on a website, and updated annually. For each area of specialization that is part of the application:

- A. Provide the published statement of purposes (mission, goals, and objectives, etc.) guiding the specialization(s) (i.e. MFA in Acting, MFA in Scenic Design, MFA in Lighting Design, etc.) and their relationship to the overall mission of the Department/School.
- B. Discuss how the resources available to the Department/School (personnel and material) serve the goals and objectives of each specific program.
- C. Indicate:
 - i. Admissions criteria
 - ii. Recruiting cycle of each program (i.e. annually, every 2 years, every 3 years)
 - iii. Number of graduate students in the program, including the number in each specific discipline within a recruiting cycle.

2. CURRICULUM, RESIDENCY AND CONTACT

MFA programs normally require a minimum of three years of full-time graduate study OR a combination of residency and professional internship supervised by the program and its professional partner. MFA programs normally require a minimum of 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent. For each area of specialization please provide:

- A. A discussion on how each program meets these expectations, or if the programs approach residency differently, describe in detail, and explain how it meets the goals and philosophy of the Department/School.
- B. Where are these requirements described and/or published?
- C. A listing and brief description of the required and elective courses including number of faculty contact hours per week.

3. FACULTY AND TEACHING PROFESSIONALS

URTA member schools are expected to maintain a faculty with significant professional experience and appropriate teaching credentials for their specialization. In addition, for each degree specialization, it is expected that there will be at least one full-time faculty member with substantial professional credentials in residence, who functions as a mentor and major academic advisor. For each area of specialization:

- A. Discuss the professional and teaching credentials of the core faculty members teaching in the specialization.
- B. Identify the full-time, in-residence faculty member(s) with substantial professional credentials in the area, functioning as mentor(s) and major academic advisor(s).
- C. Describe how students work with experienced professional faculty and guest professional artists.

4. STUDENT BODY AND STUDENT EVALUATIONS

In order to be considered for membership, the Department/School must have graduated at least one class of students in each area of specialization. Additionally, a subsequent class must be in its

final year of study. Regular and periodic evaluations of student development and progress, along with an assessment of his or her potential in the profession, should be routinely administered by each specialized program no less than twice a year. For each area of specialization please provide:

- A. The number of graduate students currently enrolled in each specialization (by year and total).
- B. A discussion on how there is sufficient enrollment and “critical mass” to allow students to artistically and intellectually stimulate and collaborate with one another.
- C. A description of the Department/School’s policies and procedures for student evaluation and assessment.

5. TRANSITIONING INTO THE PROFESSION

For each area of specialization:

- A. List specific examples of programs, policies, and/or procedures for assisting students with career entry, professional development and employment, including, but not limited to, the following or similar approaches:
 - i. Regular use of guest artists to assist students in networking within the profession.
 - ii. Showcases or other means to introduce graduates to artistic directors, agents and similar theatre professionals.
 - iii. An affiliation with some professional producing enterprise allowing students consistent internships from year to year.
- B. Provide a list of graduates from each program for the past three years, or cycles, indicating current employment status.

6. EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Responses to the following questions are solicited for informational purposes. Members and applicants are asked to self-evaluate where they currently stand in this area – the challenges faced, what they are already doing, and how they might further address the concerns.

- A. What are your department’s/program’s goals related to equity, diversity and inclusion in the following areas?
 - i. Faculty Representation
 - ii. Student recruitment and retention
 - iii. Guest Artists and Visiting Faculty
 - iv. Representation in production and public programming.
- B. What challenges do your students from underrepresented groups face, and what support systems are in place for them?
- C. What specific actions or activities has your department/program undertaken to improve equity in the arts and culture sector, including efforts both inside and outside the university setting?

Please add any other information or observations related to this subject that you feel would be helpful for URTA to know.

III. PART THREE: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR INDIVIDUAL SPECIALIZATIONS

OR PROGRAMS. Respond only to specializations or programs offered by the school or department.

A. ACTING

1. Document how the program prepares graduates for employment as professional artists by developing advanced competencies in acting (process), movement, voice, speech, stage combat, acting for media, period studies, improvisation, text analysis, dance, and other fields required by the institution.
2. Document that there is at least one full-time teacher or equivalent for each of the three areas of acting, movement and voice.
3. Document that the production program serves in the development of acting professionals by:
 - a. Providing information concerning the availability of a wide variety of performance opportunities among different theatrical genres.
 - b. Providing production schedules and policies demonstrating that each student in the program is required to perform significant roles on a regular basis.
 - c. Indicating policies and procedures that document the extent to which student actors are directed by professionally competent resident and/or guest professional directors.

B. DIRECTING

1. Document how the program prepares graduates for employment as professional artists by:
 - a. Developing advanced competencies in directing; text analysis; performance studies, including graduate level acting and directing, dramatic literature; criticism; aesthetics; and other fields required by the institution.
 - b. Developing practical understanding of and experience with collaboration among directors, designers and playwrights; directing and rehearsal process.
2. Document that the production program serves in the development of directing professionals by:
 - a. Providing information concerning the availability of a wide variety of performance and directing opportunities among different theatrical genres.
 - b. Providing production schedules and policies demonstrating that each student in the program is required to direct advanced actors in a fully produced and realized production.
 - c. Show how these include professional or professionally bound, well-prepared collaborators.

C. STAGE DESIGN AND THEATRE TECHNOLOGY (Scenic, Lighting, Costume, Projection/Media, Sound)

1. Document how the program prepares graduates for employment as professional artists by:
 - a. Developing advanced competencies in drawing/illustration, painting, model building, design drafting, color theory, history of decor and clothing, lighting, motion graphics, system design, and other fields required by the profession.
 - b. As appropriate to the specialization, developing competence in two and three-dimensional design, figure drawing, costume construction, photometrics, computer graphics, scene painting, studies in production style and form, technical direction, construction, stage properties, electricity, rigging, acoustics, materials, computer-aided

design, and craft.

- c. Developing practical understanding and experience with advanced issues in contemporary and historical aesthetics; collaboration among directors, playwrights, and designers; and dramatic literature, theatre history, and text analysis.
 - d. Developing familiarity with contemporary professional practices and the business side of theatrical design, including contracts, union membership, and career paths throughout the entertainment industry.
2. Document that the production program serves in the development of design and technology professionals by:
 - a. Providing information concerning opportunities for realized work in a variety of design/technology productions in various types of theatres and different theatrical genres.
 - b. Providing production schedules and policies demonstrating that each student in the program is required to realize a fully mounted production with significant production support.

D. STAGE MANAGEMENT

1. Document how the program prepares graduates for employment as a professional stage manager by:
 - a. Developing advanced competencies in stage management technique and practice, including directing, theatre technology, theatre management, current professional practice including rehearsal and performance work rules, and other fields required by the institution.
 - b. Developing familiarity with advanced skills in acting, design, arts and labor management, music, opera, and dance.
 - c. Developing familiarity with contemporary professional practices and the business side of stage management.
2. Document that the production program serves in the development of professional stage managers by:
 - a. Providing information concerning the availability of a wide variety of stage management opportunities among different theatrical genres and types of productions.
 - b. Providing production schedules and policies demonstrating that each student in the program is required to stage manage fully produced and realized productions that include the participation of advanced students or professional competent designers and actors.

E. ARTS LEADERSHIP (Theatre Management, Arts Administration, Producing, etc.)

1. Document how the program prepares graduates for employment as a Theatre Manager and/or as other administrative, executive, or entrepreneurial professionals by developing advanced competencies in management practices, marketing, accounting procedures, development, production management, current professional practice including rehearsal and performance work rules, labor management and other areas required by the institution.
2. Provide information concerning the availability of a wide variety of management opportunities among different types of producing environments.

F. EMERGING DISCIPLINES

Does the department/school offer MFA degrees in emerging disciplines that depart from

traditional theatre categories? {i.e. Integrated Media, Devised Theatre, Entertainment Design, Solo Artist-Creator, Applied Theatre, Pedagogy, etc.}. If so, please identify each such degree and respond to the following questions for each separate degree.

1. How does the program define the profession to which the degree points? What are the anticipated outcomes and why and how is this degree well suited to train and place students?
2. What is the arc of the program in terms of its curricular progression? How is the program applied artistically? How and why is it a Theatre degree?
3. What are the professional opportunities for students both during and after matriculation? How are students exposed to the profession to which the degree points during their work at the school and how are they introduced to that profession upon graduation?

IV. PART FOUR: ADDITIONAL EXHIBIT MATERIAL

A. NAST Evaluation Report

1. If the Department/School is accredited by NAST, please include (at your discretion) a copy of the most recent NAST Evaluators' Report and any response that was made.
2. If pursuing a concurrent process and the NAST Evaluators' Report has not yet been received, copies of the Report and any response may be forwarded as soon as available.

B. Production Presented During Campus Visit

The campus visit is best scheduled concurrent with a production that features the work of graduate students from as many of the related programs as possible.

Seeing such a production, or a part thereof, allows the reviewers to evaluate the artistic standards of the department, and the attention of the department toward the production program and its audience. Reviewers are not critiquing the performance any more than they are assessing the teaching observed in classroom visits. Rather, attending a portion of a production allows the reviewers to get a sense of the aesthetic of the program and confirm the impressions obtained in meetings, interviews, and class visits.

EXHIBIT #3

URTA REVIEWERS' REPORT

Based on the Applicant Report, your site visit itinerary and subsequent discussions, please provide detailed information for URTA regarding the institution's ability to meet membership requirements. The URTA board will use this data to assess the membership status of the program.

The following three questions will be the core of your report. The bullet points provide depth of content for each topic. Note that section #3 may does not necessarily apply to all MFA programs.

1. Does the department/school have a professional identity and orientation? Please address this question by responding specifically to each of the following:
 - A. What MFAs are offered by the institution and to what professional outcome do they point? How well does the program prepare the students for these professions? Is the curriculum, production/performance program, mentoring and placement strategy successful in its objectives?
 - B. Are the faculty engaged in professional work in venues consistent with the kind for which they are training their students? Does the institution encourage and maintain its commitment to the professional artist/teacher and facilitate faculty growth and development?
 - C. How are the students exposed to the profession during their matriculation? Assess the quality of guest artists and determine how they are used to enhance the curriculum.
 - D. How are the students introduced to the profession upon graduation? What is the strategy for career entry?
 - E. Is there regular evaluations of student development and progress, along with an assessment of their potential in the profession, and administered by each specialization no less than twice a year?

2. Does the department/school have sufficient faculty, facilities, and resources to provide excellence in MFA training and fulfill the professional orientation and ambition outlined above? Please address this question by responding specifically to each of the following:
 - A. Does the program and its production organization have sufficient budgets to provide excellent training of the artist in all MFA areas?
 - B. Does the program have sufficient faculty dedicated to the MFA programs to insure exclusive graduate education and training?
 - C. Does the program have student bodies of sufficient size and scope in its MFA programs to create a meaningful cohort of theatre colleagues?
 - D. Does the program have sufficient facilities to provide quality training and does the operation of these facilities reflect professional standards and practice?
 - E. Does the program develop potential theatrical talent and ability through fair and equitable recruiting processes?

3. Does the department/school offer MFA degrees in emerging disciplines that depart from traditional theatre categories? {i.e. Integrated Media, Devised Theatre, Entertainment Design, Solo Artist-Creator, Applied Theatre, Pedagogy, etc.}. If so, the reviewers should pose the following questions about these degree areas and incorporate this into the report.
 - A. How does the program define the profession to which these degree areas point? What are the anticipated outcomes and why and how is this degree well suited to train and place students?
 - B. What is the arc of the program in terms of its curricular progression? How is the program applied artistically? How and why is it a Theatre degree program?

- C. Does this program require specific facilities to train students in this specific discipline? Is this discipline process orient vs product oriented? For instance an Applied Theater program performing in the community may need advanced rehearsal spaces whereas a media program may need a white box theater, green screens, or other program specific components.
- D. What are the professional opportunities for students both during and after matriculation? How are students exposed to the profession to which the degree points during their work in the member institution and how are they introduced to that profession upon graduation.

The URTA report addresses different interests than does the NAST review that you may also be writing. Membership criteria are different from accreditation requirements. Please take the time to consider this distinction and assure that it is reflected in your URTA Reviewers' Report.

Sign and date the report.

UNIVERSITY RESIDENT THEATRE ASSOCIATION OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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